

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
ACTIVITY REPORT within the P-MRNRD
JULY 2003

CONSERVATION PLANNING/APPLICATION

- ❖ Walthill field office completed 2 preliminary wetland determinations and 2 converted wetland determinations.
- ❖ South Sioux City field office has received 18 HEL/Wetland determination requests for FY 2003, and they have completed 2 Conservation Assistance Program applications for fall construction.
- ❖ Blair field office has received 29 HEL/Wetland Determination/ASCS-569 requests for FY 2003.
- ❖ Douglas/Sarpy Counties have 4 summer jobs; 2 of the jobs have been completed.
- ❖ During the past month, Burt County has received requests for 2 certified wetland determinations and 8 requests for HEL determinations. HEL plan revisions have been requested by 2 producers.
- ❖ Burt County has received 31 applications for fall terrace and waterway projects.
- ❖ Omaha field office completed registration in E-Gov for 2 potential Technical Service Providers.
- ❖ Blair field office staff has completed layout and design of all summer projects; 18 applications have been received for conservation practices in fall 2003.
- ❖ The National Resources Inventory (NRI) data collection for 2003 was completed by all field offices.

PIGEON/JONES CREEK WATERSHED

- ❖ Construction has begun on Pigeon/Jones Structure 3, near Hubbard, NE; Jensen Construction of Stanton is the contractor on the project.

EQIP

- ❖ NRCS State Range Specialist, Dana Larson, was in Burt County to assist with the planning of 2 range applications that total approximately 550 acres of cool season grass pasture.
- ❖ EQIP grade stabilization structure for Larsen Brothers in Washington County has been built.

EQIP SUMMARY

The deadline for all field offices to submit completed EQIP applications to the NRCS' State Office is August 8. Approximately 57 EQIP applications were received for 2003.

The Papio-Missouri River NRD received an allocation of \$299,000 to be used for contracts approved within the NRD for General & Ground/Surface Water Conservation contracts. Funding for Animal Feeding Operations will be provided from the State's EQIP General Fund.

Applications, depending on practices selected for cost share, will be ranked using one of the following ranking factors:

- 1) Ground & Surface Water Conservation - the primary goal is to maximize water savings on irrigated land by converting irrigated land to non-irrigated land, conversion from gravity to sprinkler irrigation and conversion from high pressure to low pressure.
- 2) Animal Feeding Operations – livestock waste systems with comprehensive nutrient management plans required.
- 3) General – includes a wide range of practices such as 100% no-till, pest and nutrient management, terraces, waterways, dams, planned grazing system that may include cross fencing, wells, pipeline and tanks.

The District Conservationist, Don Doty, in consultation with the Local Work Group, modified the general and ground/surface water conservation ranking to give priority to applications in the following watersheds:

Cunningham Watershed: Washington & Douglas Counties
Silver Creek: Burt County
Pigeon/Jones Creek Watershed: Dakota County

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)

- ❖ Two filter strip contracts were completed in Thurston County.
- ❖ Burt County had 3 requests for CRP Managed Haying and Grazing for 82.3 acres. They have also received 2 new continuous CRP contracts for filter strips, both planned for fall seeding.
- ❖ CRP status reviews have been completed for 2003 in Burt and Thurston Counties;
- ❖ CRP status reviews are ongoing in the Omaha field office.
- ❖ Omaha NRCS field office provided GPS training to the local FSA office.

WETLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (WRP)

- ❖ A 28.3 acre WRP project that included 6.9 acres of upland restoration was completed in Burt County.

GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM (GRP)

- ❖ The Tekamah field office has had interest from area producers in GRP, but no applications have been received.
- ❖ Blair field office has received 2 GRP applications for 120+ acres of grasslands.

EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROGRAM (EWP)

- ❖ A flood damage assessment report was requested by the Thurston County Road Department after significant storm events occurring between July 4th and 5th dumped 2.5 inches of rain in less than 2 hours. NRCS personnel reviewed damage assessments for debris removal, bridge abutment repair and culverts that had been completely washed out and/or collapsed. On July 15, 2003, a Flood Damage Report

was filed with the Emergency Watershed Program for 9 sites in Thurston County. Funding appropriation for the project is still pending.

WATER QUALITY

- ❖ Douglas/Sarpy Counties have 3 well applications pending.
- ❖ Burt County has 6 well applications pending.
- ❖ Dakota County has 10 well applications pending.
- ❖ Washington County abandoned 1 well; 13 well applications pending.
- ❖ Thurston County has 1 well application pending.

INFORMATION/EDUCATION

- ❖ The South Sioux City field office staff provided news items and photos with captions for the NRD Share Page published in the *South Sioux City Star* for the month of July. The news items were on the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Monument Dedication Festival; the Big Fish Camp II which was a Lewis & Clark reenactment; Stop The Spread of Purple Loosestrife; and the Scenic Byway Photography Contest. The photos with captions were of the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Monument, a Purple Loosestrife plant and the current list of noxious weeds in Nebraska.
- ❖ Omaha field office reviewed and revised seeding recommendations for the Corps of Engineers concerning a wetland mitigation project on Vencil's Island in Sarpy County; approximately 170 acres of native grasses and wildflowers will be planted.

CIVIL RIGHTS

- ❖ Blair field office, Ralph Arauza, assisted the Civil Rights Team with the Lower Loup civil rights appraisal.

DISTRICT PROGRAMS

- ❖ Denny Piper and Rod Kinning, NRD staff in Walthill, conducted maintenance activities on Silver Creek structures and collected and helped shred 9,000 pesticide containers.

WASHINGTON COUNTY RURAL WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM

- ❖ Blair field office NRD staff has received numerous phone calls and walk-in inquiries from concerned landowners living in the 48 square mile area that the new water project would encompass. The signup was extended from July 1st to August 15th. Darlene Hensley, Field Office Secretary, is assisting landowners with completing applications, aerial maps and collecting hookup fees. Terry Schumacher, NRD Field Representative, is contacting landowners and making on-site visits with potential applicants for rural water service.

Reported by: Robert Hall, Resource Conservationist, NRCS, Omaha
August 13, 2003

Cc: Ken Noonan, ASTC/FO, NRCS, Lincoln
NRCS Activity Report